

EXOTIC CONIFER ASSOCIATION

MID-SOUTH REPORT

MARCH 2010

The first quarter of 2010 (Jan – Mar) brought one of the coldest, snowiest seasons the Mid-South has seen in a number of years. Record cold in January recorded prolonged temperatures well below normal and then repeated itself for awhile in February. Several weather breaks did occur during which many tree farmers did get some planting accomplished (mostly in late Feb, and then again in late March). Some farmers in Northeast TN and western North Carolina reported that this was the snowiest and coldest winter season they had recorded in over 20 years. Here in Crossville, TN (middle of the state on the Cumberland Plateau) we were recording several weeks of below freezing weather in January followed by two weeks when we were able to plant some bare root Eastern White Pin, but then we returned to freezing conditions once again. We were also surprised with a March snowfall of about 6-7 inches (rare in middle TN at this time of year). Once the weather broke, we went right into summerlike conditions, with late March and early April recording temperatures well into the 80s. What happened to Spring???

In any case, most farmers are getting caught up on planting, spraying, and beginning to trim up their farms for the spring and summer seasons. Look like this year may be troublesome for any late planting of bare-root stock, and many of us will have to resort to the much dreaded multiple handling of containerizing our stock for the summer, and holding off until October and after to continue our field planting.

The Tennessee Christmas Tree Growers Association held its Annual Meeting in Nashville on Mar 13th this year, and held its first Annual Tree Contest. Winners in the Fir and Spruce categories were ROAN VALLEY Tree Farm (Johnson City, TN) and Wintergreen Farms (Laurel Bloomery, TN). Both of these farms are now eligible to present a tree for the upcoming National Christmas Tree Association Annual Convention in North Carolina in August of 2010.

Here at ARCY Acres, we eagerly await the arrival of our new Myers Spruce stock from Downey Nursery in April, but will likely have to plant in containers until the fall planting season, as the temperatures are just too hot for planting this time of year.

Rainfall has been more than adequate through late March throughout the mid south for the quarter which should help settle-in the early planted stock in the region. Let's just hope that the recent high temperatures are not followed by an early dry spell, as we really need about 4 inches of rainfall per month in April and May to set our stock for the upcoming summer heat and often experienced drought conditions.

Stay tuned for our Spring update in the next issue.

Art Landrigan, Mid-South Director